

foot had not only favored a revision, but had published suggestions for carrying it out. By the influence of Bishop Wilberforce it was decided in the convocation of Canterbury, Jan. 19, 1870, that a revision should be undertaken, and the Old and New Testament companies were appointed. The revised New Testament was published in 1881, the Old Testament in 1885, and the Apocrypha in 1895. First among the reasons for attempting a new translation is the discovery of many ancient Greek manuscripts which were unknown to Erasmus and those who followed him in establishing what is called the *Textus Receptus*. Erasmus had only a few quite modern Greek MSS.; and although he gave what may be called the traditional and recognized text, it is not safe to assume that this was substantially accurate. No editor of a classical text has acted on this assumption. Bentley's conjectures for the revision of the texts of Latin and Greek authors have, in many cases, been verified by the discovery of ancient MSS. The correct text of Shakespeare was called in question some years ago; and critics like Mr. Charles Knight and Mr. Dyce returned to the folio editions of the collected work, and the quarto editions of particular plays, and thus a much more accurate and trustworthy text has been secured.

Now, very important MSS. of the greatest antiquity have been discovered since the *Textus Receptus* was published. The Alexandrian MS., now in the British Museum, arrived in England, and became accessible to critics, in the reign of Charles II.; the Vatican MS. had long been known to exist, but lay hid in the depths of the great library until almost within a generation from our own time; the Sinaitic, now at St. Petersburg, was discovered by Tischendorf, less than 50 years ago, in a convent on Mt. Sinai. Many other MSS. of less importance, but of great value, have been discovered.

Mr. Scrivener, the member of the New Testament company, who represented the conservative side of N. T. criticism, and who was continually referred to by Dean Burgon as an authority on his side, declared in the preface to the third edition of his work on the Criticism of the Greek Testament, that the revision of the text was incumbent upon the revisers, and the neglect of this would have reduced their work to a nullity. Moreover, Dr. Scrivener declares that the revision was not determined as much as had been supposed by one school of criticism. In other words, we have the distinct testimony of Dr. Scrivener that the theories of Westcott and Hort did not dominate the revisers, and that Dr. Scrivener's views were duly considered and partially adopted by the company.

Any one who was familiar with the text of the new Testament, with the readings of the great MSS., with the critical labors of Mill, Griesbach, Lachmann, Tischendorf and Tregelles, to go no further, must have been long familiar with all the new readings of the new text as being received by most of the leading critics. Conservative critics like Wordsworth, had adopted

a very large proportion of them; and in the judgment of many living critics, the revisers have not gone far enough, and have erred on the side of conservatism. Indeed, the rule which required that a majority of two thirds should favor a change, before any reading was altered, made it certain that the work should be conducted in a conservative spirit.

It has been complained that so large a number of various readings have been brought forward by the revisers. But such an objection is unreasonable. In the first place these various readings exist and cannot be ignored. But further, it is a simple matter of fact that, in cases where we have no various readings, the text is generally corrupt, whilst, on the contrary, editions based on various readings are more accurate.

With regard to the translation the revisers laid down for themselves the rule, that there should be no modernizing of the language of the authorized version. They resolved to make use of no words which were not in use in the age of the version of 1611. Whilst several of the earlier versions were based upon the Vulgate, the revisers had continual reference to the Greek, and this alone brought about a large class of alterations. For example, the Latin language has no aorist (past tense) and represents both the Greek aorist and perfect by the perfect tense. Consequently, in a good many places, the authorized version has represented the Greek aorist by the English perfect, slightly altering the meaning of the original. Many of these passages are altered in the revised version with the best effect. Examples of this kind may be seen in the passages read during the general synod.—e.g. 1 Corinth. XII., 13; Eph. IV., 4.

Another principle adopted by the translators was the rendering of the same word in the original by the same English word. In the authorized version, the same word occurring several times in the same passage, is frequently rendered by different English words. In the revised version this is altered, and the same Greek word is rendered by the same English word. Examples may be seen in Romans, where we have "rejoice," "joy," and "glory,"—three different translations of the same Greek word. It is said that these variations are an improvement. But surely it is the work of reverence to preserve and not to improve upon the diction of one whom we believe to be inspired of God. One of the most interesting illustrations of this improvement may be found in the gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark. Many passages in the original texts of these gospels are verbally identical. As they were translated by different copies of the revisers of 1611, frequently the translations do not correspond when the originals are identical. The revisers have altered this, so that the English reader can now, for the first time, understand how far these two evangelists coincide.

It has been objected that the alterations made in the new version are

unnecessarily numerous but it is probable that a comparison between the Bishops' Bible and the authorized would show more alterations than have been made in the revised. "To be," for "been made," in the revised. "Take for example the comfortable words," in the Communion service. In the first (St. Matt. XI., 28,) there are three changes in A. V., whilst A. V. and R. V. are identical. In the second, (St. John, III. 16,) A. V. has three changes, whilst R. V. has one change from A. V. In the third, (1 Tim. I, 15,) there are two changes in A. V. and one in R. V. In the fourth, (1 St. John II, 1,) there are no changes.

As an example of the changes brought against alterations in R. V. Lord Grimthorpe has declared that one of the worst is in Rev. XXII., 11. It is not necessary to quote the words here. Let the reader take the two versions to be compared, especially with the Greek text, and it will be seen that not only is the new translation more accurate, but that it brings out a deeper and richer meaning.

Improvements might be pointed out in every page. Complaints of the harshness of the revised version generally mean no more than that the new rendering is unfamiliar. Every one can understand the jar produced by an alteration in words so familiar, so beautiful and so venerated as the best known texts of the sacred scripture. In some cases the rhythm of the text may be less agreeable, but in those cases there is a gain in the meaning. Generally, however, it is simply the novelty of the rendering which offends. Let it be remembered that this is a grievance which will effect only the present generation. Moreover, in many places there are actual improvements in the rhythm. For example, "Take thine own," instead of, "Take that thine is."

Some have complained that the revisers did not carry their work far enough; and some improvements might still be made. For instance the word *daemon*, would be better translated "demon," instead of using the same word which translates *d'abolos*. So the word translated Comforter, might be better rendered by Advocate, although most men would be sorry to lose the old word.

It has been objected that the new translation is unsettling to the minds of the people at large, and more particularly, that the original readings are calculated to disturb people by letting them know that there are other possible renderings. This is truly a wonderful objection. Do we then mean to say that we can preserve the faith of the people only by keeping them in ignorance? But we cannot keep them in ignorance. These difficulties were known long before the revised version was undertaken. Sunday after Sunday preachers have declared from the pulpit that "the texts which they use need revision. If we are asked which is the more unsettling—the constant making of the text by preachers, or the giving to the people of a version which, they may be assured, is more accurate,